

Food, sex & strangers. Understanding religions as everyday life (2013)

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The book that is reviewed, it is an excellent work, since it gives a new perspective to the study of religion, because not only one must look at the beliefs but at the practices, rituals and social relations that they unfold. Note that in many cases beliefs do not go in the same direction as practices. Probably because of the religious lag, that is, the practices are adapted to the daily life forms rather than to religious beliefs. In this sense, another of the highlights of Harvey 'the problem of defining religion and the problem of how we go about defining religion'(page 16).

The first chapter tries to clarify the object of his work, is that traditional religion focuses on the scriptures, sermons or ritual beliefs. It involves to show a model based on the authority of some theological writings. In that pretense of showing that religion is a daily doing rather than a believing yes, it invites the reader to perform a series of exercises, for example, exercise 1, "walking" or exercise 2, "drawing what is not a chair "Making him see the power and strength of any of our knowledge.

In chapter 2, Harvey addresses the study of religion from "another space, another place", that is, from specific fields of specific traditions and not from Western Christianity, as is often the case in most studies of religion. According to the author (p. 4,5,6), studying religion in this way will help those who are interested in the study of religions to better understand religion in everyday life, since they are not alien to the daily development of religion, but the persons are part of it. And raises Why is religion different from cooking? (P.17), Nevertheless, he sees no difference.

The author says that religion is an aspect of culture, with its peculiarities, but it is a social construct of a specific environment. And it projects the reader to think of questions of definition, categorization and contingency, both as regards the "character" or "composition" of specific traditions, and the rigid and alien molds that scholars have often artificially exposed, or at least quite far from the religious and cultural reality of the people. In other words, according to Harvey, religion is present in every day-to-day practice, and as we understand it today, these ideas have arisen from the texts of social scientists of religion and scholars of their own

religions. So in its first chapters can be found a critique of religion as a belief, and advocating for the pursuit of objectivity through the study of religion from practice.

In Chapter 3, Harvey proposes that Christianity is not a religion, breaking with the established social and cultural. It does so by arguing that belief in Jesus, or God, is central to Christianity. Which leads to think that religion is defined in terms of ritual, practice and relationships while any other religion is based on practice, not belief. According to this, the author says: This mean that either Christianity is the only religion, or it is not a religion at all "(pages, 43) because it is based on beliefs and believers, while other beliefs that are based on practice do not.

In chapter 5, he explains that the search for the meaning of religion based on ideas, thoughts and texts, It is not the most successful, because They are often divorce from the communities that use it. Instead, he argues that by engaging the "real world" he comes closer to the explanation of religion, because he is close to the material, the mundane, as he writes, "marked by material life, bodily engagement, and concrete social interactions between humans themselves and between human and "other-than-human" persons "(page 83) Instead, the animist societies, read Native Americans, have a categorization of beliefs beyond the figure of a God.

This use of explanatory case study is observed in chapters 6, 7 and 8 and 9, where it depicts different cases, such as Maori, African animism or Jewish orthodox pilgrimage. From all this it is deduced that the animist and indigenous religion is more religion than the monotheistic religions more numerous. In chapter 10, He focuses the question of religion initially raised in the first chapters and explores the challenges of the concept of religion. He begins the chapter by referring to paganism, "Paganism is a new religion that has evolving with the modernist West, on older repertoires to engage with contemporary concerns (p.171). To conclude that paganism is a religion born of daily practice and therefore deliberately created according to contemporary needs.

In Chapter 11, Harvey goes back on his argument of defining religion, and indicates that, for the most part, the authors who define religion are theologians and academics, and this they do in terms of belief. In daily Christian lives the faithful do not prioritize belief, but practice. But when one rejects the proposition that Christianity is founded on belief, then we discover Christianity, as Religion because it is built upon practice. Then it turns out to be a religion after all. Finally,

Chapter 12 takes stock of the different approaches and definitions of religion. Harvey finds in the Scholars part of the problem of the definition of religion, since they have treated the subject by analyzing it from the religious experience and how it has been changing, analyzing the texts, as the religious people decide to live their lives, instead of they really do.

In summarize, this is a world in which religion is an everyday matter in which relational beings engage with others, sometimes across species boundaries. Religion is a project in which imagination and intimacy shape people's adaptive and evolving performances and lifeways, always in relationship with others" (page IX-X).

It is a text of great interest to those initiated in the study of religion, by the appropriate methodology and theory used, combining case studies with theory, which lead the reader to participate in the text and ask questions about religion and cultures, as to questioning issues such as the theoretical-practical relationship of religions, so something differential or unified within an attitude necessary to live day to day in a given culture. Study different religious cultures, Maori, Christian, Jewish, Lutheran, animist, Muslim, new atheists, etc.

We must also point out that Harvey's point of view of religion in practice is quite different from theory, which It makes a lot of sense, however, that this is the main argument of a book, for I am really concerned, since it is like theoretically going back forty years. I think this was long overdue. On the other hand, starting to analyze the symbolism and understanding of religious practice, I found it very interesting, however, I lacked more depth. I hope will address that ability that Harvey has in new projects.

To conclude, highlight two extremely important aspects that come out of your reading. The reigning materialism, in writing: "Or, more sociologically, he purposes of religious activities is to create and continue cooperation in multispecies communities"(pages, 113) This is true, however, it puts it as a fundamental premise, here is the problem, it is a goal In the second place, the message of the Deep Green Resistance (DGR) is present in almost every text. Christianity has messages related to the protection of the environment, but not as intertwined as Harvey does in the text with examples about analysis of animist religions.

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